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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0792  
INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 1084

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000884

SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/ES, NEA, IO/UNP AND NEA/MAG  
ISLAMABAD PLS PASS TO S/ES - WOHLERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2019  
TAGS: [OVIP](#) [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [EAID](#) [ETRD](#) [MASS](#) [AG](#) [WI](#) [MO](#)  
SUBJECT: KING MOHAMMED VI WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WESTERN  
SAHARA WITH THE SECRETARY

REF: A. RABAT 0881  
[B](#). RABAT 0879  
[C](#). RABAT 0878

Classified By: Ambassador Samuel L. Kaplan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) On October 28, in preparation for the Secretary,s upcoming visit, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Taieb Fassi Fihri and his Chief of Staff, Ambassador Nasser Bourita, reviewed the issues that King Mohammed VI would like to raise with the Secretary. In addition to inviting the Secretary to attend the launch of Morocco,s clean energy program on November 2 (Ref C), the Minister focused on bilateral issues, the Middle East peace process (Refs A and B), Western Sahara, and the situation in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, he only elaborated on some of those issues.

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BILATERAL RELATIONS  
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[1](#)2. (C) Fassi Fihri explained that Morocco,s relationship with the United States really began to transform following King Hassan II,s 1998 U.S. visit and then-First Lady Hillary Clinton,s visit to Morocco. The relationship continued to develop during the Bush Administration, with Major non-NATO Ally status; the first Forum for the Future in Rabat in 2004; negotiation, signature and ratification of the Free Trade Agreement; the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) Compact; and significant military purchases, including the 24 F-16s and 24 T-6s.

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WESTERN SAHARA  
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[1](#)3. (C) Turning to Western Sahara, the Minister noted that the Obama Administration had explained that the change in its Western Sahara language was tactical. However, the current position was far less clear that the Bush Administration,s position that &autonomy was the best solution.<sup>8</sup> Fassi Fihri said the King would seek assurances that the Administration,s position has really not changed. In fact, the King hoped that the USG would return to its previous position because Algeria has become more radical since the MINURSO renewal in April, using language like &colonization<sup>8</sup> and &exploitation of resources<sup>8</sup> to characterize Moroccan activity in Western Sahara. &Such language does not help Ambassador Ross,<sup>8</sup> opined the Minister. He asserted that Algeria,s claim that it imposed no pre-conditions for negotiations with Morocco was absurd given Algeria,s refusal to work within the Arab Maghreb Union or to discuss opening the Moroccan-Algerian border before the future of Western Sahara is resolved. The

Minister concluded by appealing to the U.S. to rephrase its position on Western Sahara to clearly support Morocco,s autonomy plan once again.

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Kaplan